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## PRESS RELEASE

# Baker-Polito Administration Celebrates Polpis Harbor and Town Pier Dredging Projects on Nantucket

New Massachusetts Dredging Program will enhance navigation and habitat in the Commonwealth's coastal communities

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Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

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**NANTUCKET** — Lt. Governor Karyn Polito joined Town Manager C. Elizabeth Gibson and other state and local officials at a ribbon cutting to celebrate completion of the Polpis Harbor Dredging Project.

Additionally, Lt. Governor Polito announced today that Nantucket will receive a \$500,000 award through the first-ever grant round of the Massachusetts Dredging Program to support dredging at the Town Pier in Nantucket Harbor.

“Supporting the vitality of the Commonwealth’s 78 coastal communities is critical to the state’s blue economy,” **said Governor Charlie Baker.** “Both the pilot dredging program and this year’s inaugural round of dredging awards highlight the impact of investing in local initiatives that complement the unique priorities of individual cities and towns.”

“We are excited to establish this important new economic tool, which can have a direct impact on the commerce and quality of life of Nantucket and other coastal communities

in Massachusetts,” **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito**. “In my role as Seaport Economic Council Chairwoman, I have seen the tremendous impact that dedicated dredging and coastal assistance funds can have on maritime industries, and we are committed to promoting more economic growth through this new funding source.”

Completed in January, the Polpis Harbor Dredging Project, [which received a \\$520,000 grant through the Commonwealth’s 2018 Navigational Dredging Pilot Program](#)

[\(/news/baker-polito-administration-announces-2018-navigational-dredging-pilot-program-awards\)](#),

removed nearly 12,000 cubic yards of sand from the harbor’s entrance channel, restoring all-tide navigation for commercial shell fishing and recreational boating. Dredging also improved water quality and aquatic habitat. More than \$855,000 in municipal funding was also leveraged to complete the project.

Polpis Harbor supports more than 200 moorings, 10 acres of oyster aquaculture and is a harbor of safe refuge from extreme coastal storms. Prior to the 2018 project, dredging had not occurred in Polpis Harbor since 1993.

In March, [the Baker-Polito Administration announced its first standalone grant program](#)

[\(/news/baker-polito-administration-announces-first-round-of-massachusetts-dredging-program\)](#) offering up to \$4 million in focused funding for saltwater dredging on a competitive, annual basis. Dredging assistance is essential to assist coastal communities in the maintenance and improvement of their navigational waterways and support the long-term growth and sustainability of the state’s maritime economy.

“The Massachusetts Dredging Program is an important economic catalyst for the Commonwealth’s blue economy,” **said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy**. “Responsive programs such as the new Massachusetts Dredging Program will allow cities and towns from Nantucket to New Bedford and all along our coastline to maintain their rich maritime traditions and expand our coastal economies.”

The upcoming Nantucket Town Pier Dredging Project will remove an estimated 1,180 cubic yards of sediment from the dock basin of the Town Pier in Nantucket Harbor. This work will support the replacement of the existing docking system, which was severely damaged by coastal storms in 2018. The project will further provide all-tide berthing at the pier’s public slips and utilize \$580,000 in local funding.

The Nantucket Town Pier generates approximately \$142,000 in annual revenue for the island, and is the gateway to downtown Nantucket for transient boaters and cruise ship passengers who frequent the area's shops, restaurants, three major hotels and about a dozen bed and breakfasts. The Town Pier provides berthing for over 100 commercial, recreational and transient vessels, as well as provides important docking for tenders and dinghies, which support use of over 1,500 moorings in the harbor.

"The Town is grateful to the Baker-Polito Administration for supporting the Polpis Harbor Dredging Project, and now Nantucket's Town Pier Dredging Project. These grants are a valuable supplement to Town-appropriated funds, which have enabled us to move forward on these projects after several years of planning. Among the many benefits of these projects are restored navigational access to Polpis Harbor, increased tidal exchange to support eel grass and shellfish habitats and expanded capacity at our Town Pier to support a new dock infrastructure," **said Town Manager C. Elizabeth Gibson.**

"This grant will help improve access to Polpis Harbor for commercial shellfishing, recreational boating, help strengthen barrier beaches as dredging sediments are deposited along the shorelines and protect natural island habitats," **said Senator Julian Cyr.** "All these benefits highlight the importance of dredging as an indispensable part of infrastructure maintenance and preservation of clean water quality in coastal communities like Nantucket."

"Dredging is crucial for the long-term marine health and public access to Polpis Harbor. Working in tandem with the Town of Nantucket's shellfish propagation efforts, the increased tidal flows will help improve water quality and ensure a sound eel grass habitat to help support these unique and delicate ecosystems," **said Representative Dylan Fernandes.** "This grant will go a long way in supporting the long-term sustainability and wellbeing of our coastal waters, communities and blue economies."

In 2018, Nantucket also received \$1 million from the [Seaport Economic Council \(/orgs/seaport-economic-council\)](https://www.mass.gov/orgs/seaport-economic-council) for improvements to the Harbormaster's office. State and local funds were targeted to replace the office and upgrade shower and bathroom facilities for boaters. The Nantucket Harbormaster supports 13,500 transient vessels and 45 daily ferry transits seasonally as well as recreational and commercial slips.

The [Massachusetts Dredging Program](/massachusetts-dredging-program) (</massachusetts-dredging-program>) is financed with funds allocated under the 2018 Economic Development Bill, which was signed by Governor Baker on August 9, 2018. The program builds on the success of the 2018 Navigational Dredging Pilot Program, which awarded \$3.6 million to 10 projects, tapping into \$3.9 million in local funding.

Applications are evaluated by the program administrator, the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED), in consultation with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. EOHED anticipates awarding four more projects in the 2019 Grant Round. A minimum 50 percent local match is required for any application under consideration.

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**Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito**

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